

# OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE

SPECIAL ORDER NO. 2

February 26, 2019

**SUBJECT:** LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT – DEFINED – ESTABLISHED; VIOLATION INVOLVED IN LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT – ESTABLISHED; LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT PROCEDURES – ESTABLISHED; LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT ARRESTS – ESTABLISHED; LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT NOTIFICATION – ESTABLISHED; AND, LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT REPORTING – ESTABLISHED

**BACKGROUND:** There have been several incidents of members of the public discharging a high-powered focused beam of light (laser) at occupied aircraft including commercial airlines, private aircraft, and Air Support Division helicopters. This is very dangerous and disrupts flight patterns, inhibits a pilot's vision, and endangers aircraft passengers as well as the public on the ground in the immediate vicinity.

**PURPOSE:** This Order establishes investigative responsibilities and institutes Department protocols related to a Laser Strike at an Aircraft within the City of Los Angeles. Major Crimes Division shall be designated as the responsible entity for investigating incidents where lasers or concentrated amplified light-emitting devices are willfully pointed at a private, commercial, government, or Department aircraft.

## PROCEDURE:

- I. **LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT – DEFINED – ESTABLISHED.** Department Manual Section 4/207, *Laser Strike on Aircraft – Definitions*, has been established and is attached.
- II. **VIOLATION INVOLVED IN LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT – ESTABLISHED.** Department Manual Section 4/207.05, *Violation Involved in Laser Strike on Aircraft*, has been established and is attached.
- III. **LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT PROCEDURES – ESTABLISHED.** Department Manual Section 4/207.10, *Laser Strike on Aircraft Procedures*, has been established and is attached.
- IV. **LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT ARRESTS – ESTABLISHED.** Department Manual Section 4/207.15, *Laser Strike on Aircraft Arrests*, has been established and is attached.
- V. **LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT NOTIFICATION – ESTABLISHED.** Department Manual Section 4/207.20, *Laser Strike on Aircraft Notification*, has been established and is attached.
- VI. **LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT REPORTING – ESTABLISHED.** Department Manual Section 4/207.25, *Laser Strike on Aircraft Reporting*, has been established and is attached.

**AMENDMENTS:** This Order adds Sections 4/207, 4/207.05, 4/207.10, 4/207.15, 4/207.20, and 4/207.25 of the Department Manual.

**AUDIT RESPONSIBILITY:** The Commanding Officer, Audit Division, shall review this directive and determine whether an audit or inspection shall be conducted in accordance with Department Manual Section 0/080.30.

  
**MICHELE R. MOORE**  
Chief of Police

**Attachment**

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**207. LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT – DEFINITIONS.**

**Aircraft – Defined.** Per California Public Utilities Code 21012, Aircraft means any manned contrivance used or designed for navigation of, or flight in, the air requiring certification and registration as prescribed by federal statute or regulation. Per Section 21012, manned lighter-than-air balloons and ultralight vehicles as defined in the regulations of the Federal Aviation Administration (14 Code of Federal Regulations Part 103), whether or not certificated by the Federal Aviation Administration, shall not be considered to be aircraft for purposes of this part.

**Note:** As used in this section, “aircraft” includes any contrivance intended for, and capable of, transporting persons through airspace, such as airplanes and helicopters.

**Laser – Defined.** A device that utilizes the natural oscillations of atoms or molecules between energy levels for generating coherent electromagnetic radiation in the ultraviolet, visible, or infrared region of the spectrum, and when discharged exceeds one milliwatt continuous wave.

**Laser Pointer – Defined.** Any device designed or used to amplify electromagnetic radiation by stimulated emission that emits a beam designed to be used by the operator as a pointer or highlighter to indicate, mark, or identify a specific position, place, item or object.

**Laser Strike on Aircraft – Defined.** A willfull and knowing act of discharging a laser at an aircraft, whether in motion or in flight, while occupied.

**207.05 VIOLATION INVOLVED IN LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT.** When a Laser Strike on Aircraft appears to have been in violation of the law (e.g., California Penal Code §248 or 18 U.S. Code §39A), the responding officer shall take appropriate action, complete an Investigative Report, Form 03.01.00, titled “Discharging a Laser at an Aircraft,” include the elements of the offense, and shall immediately contact the Criminal Investigation Section, Major Crimes Division (MCD).

**Note:** During off hours, MCD can be reached via the Department Operations Center, Communications Division.

**207.10 LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT PROCEDURES.** Major Crimes Division (MCD) shall be designated as the responsible entity for investigating incidents where lasers or concentrated amplified light-emitting devices are maliciously used on private, commercial, government, or Department aircraft. When MCD is unavailable, a notification shall be made to the Department Operations Center (DOC).

*If an officer witnesses a Laser Strike on Aircraft (LSOA), or an attempt to commit an LSOA, he*

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*or she shall notify Air Support Division (ASD). Officers shall coordinate with ASD to attempt to detect or apprehend the suspect(s).*

*Note: Air Support Division personnel shall complete their own Investigative Report (IR), Form 03.01.00, if they become a victim of an LSOA.*

***Area Watch Commander's Responsibilities.*** *Area watch commanders shall ensure that if MCD personnel have indicated that MCD cannot respond to the Area of occurrence, an officer shall complete an IR with the title "Discharging a Laser at an Aircraft," and make sure to utilize either the Uniform Crime Reporting Crime Class (CC) Code 230, Aggravated Assault; or, CC Code 231, Aggravated Assault on Police Officer, based on whether a civilian/government aircraft or a police aircraft was involved. The Modus Operandi (MO) Code 0388 shall be used, which states "Suspect Points Laser at Plane/Helicopter." The officer shall mark the checkbox "Extra Copies" on the left side of the IR and write "MCD" and "ASD."*

***Area Records Unit Responsibilities.*** *Area Records Unit personnel shall ensure that the indicated IR CC Code 230, Aggravated Assault; or, CC Code 231, Aggravated Assault on Police Officer, is entered into the Consolidated Crime Analysis Database (CCAD); and, that the MO Code 0388, "Suspect Points Laser at Plane/Helicopter" is entered into the CCAD, along with extra copies to MCD, Stop 400, and ASD, Stop 428.*

***207.15 LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT ARRESTS.*** *The Criminal Investigation Section, Major Crimes Division, is responsible for investigating, conducting follow-up, and arresting individuals involved in Laser Strike on Aircraft (LSOA) incident(s), booking evidence, and having any evidence tested. The filing of criminal charges involving an LSOA shall be handled in the same manner as other misdemeanor or felony case filings.*

*Note: A copy of any Investigative Report, Form 03.01.00, or Arrest Report, Form 05.02.00, involving an LSOA shall be forwarded to Air Support Division.*

***207.20 LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT NOTIFICATION.*** *The responding patrol officers receiving the initial call to the scene of a Laser Strike on Aircraft shall, without delay, notify Major Crimes Division with the following information:*

- *Time and location of the laser strike;*
- *Identification number of the victim aircraft;*
- *Type and class of the aircraft;*
- *Owner of the aircraft or affiliated governmental agency;*
- *Name and address of the pilot, co-pilot, and crew;*
- *Extent of injuries or complained of injuries to the crew or passengers;*

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- *Damage to the aircraft or other property;*
- *Approximate location or Global Positioning System coordinates of the incident, if available;*
- *Circumstances of the laser strike;*
- *Suspect(s) description, including vehicles or vessels used; and,*
- *The unit and officer reporting.*

**207.25 LASER STRIKE ON AIRCRAFT REPORTING.** *An officer who receives a report of, or observes an aircraft being illuminated by a high-powered focused beam of light (laser strike) or other concentrated amplified light-emitting device shall complete an Investigative Report (IR), Form 03.01.00, and forward a copy of the report to Major Crimes Division (MCD) and Air Support Division (ASD). The IR shall be titled "Discharging a Laser at an Aircraft." The report shall include:*

- *The "N" number or registration number which appears on the aircraft;*
- *The color and markings of the aircraft;*
- *The general type of the aircraft, such as helicopter, fixed-wing, single-engine, multi-engine, high-wing, or low-wing;*
- *An estimate of the altitude of the aircraft above the ground;*
- *A description of the manner in which the aircraft was being illuminated by the laser or focused light, and what actions were initiated by the crew to avoid the illumination, such as climbing, diving, aerobatics, or motor acceleration;*
- *Any injuries, medical treatment, or temporary visual disruptions (blindness, pain, burning, etc.) sustained by the victim(s);*
- *Approximate location or Global Positioning System coordinates of the incident, if available;*
- *A description of the involved suspect(s) and/or suspect(s) vehicle/vessel;*
- *Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of witnesses; and,*
- *Date, time, and location of occurrence.*

*When an aircraft is involved in a situation that could cause an immediate danger to the public, the officer shall notify the nearest air unit or ASD and the Department Operation Center.*

**Major Crimes Division's Responsibilities.** *Upon receipt of any report involving a Laser Strike on Aircraft (LSOA), MCD shall assume primary investigative responsibility for LSOA cases that involve aircraft in motion or in flight.*

*The CO, MCD, shall have the final authority in determining which cases MCD shall investigate.*